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wherein critics have seen need to discover "the dark lady" and consequently have ridden hard for a fall. The grounds shown for Milton's "Donna leggiadra" couplet will satisfy present questioners; also, the evidence here prepares for the attribution that the editor confidently expects to make of all the Italian sonnets to inspiration from an "Emilia" resident in London. Like many other scholars, Mr. Smart accepts the Italian pieces as early work.

These are representative examples of the literary and documentary phases of Mr. Smart's exposition. Much discussion will arise through his use of evidence from Fazio degli Uberti and Giovanni della Casa to demonstrate Milton's conception of the sonnet form. Every scholar, however, will welcome this examination of the sonnet form in English literary history, for Mr. Smart has definite proof of his assertions. The classicist Milton seems well relieved from that old burden put upon him for ignoring the relation of lines to sentences, for disregarding presumed principles of Italian sonnet form. Here again appear the methods of careful scholarship in testing established assertions.

Owners of the book will welcome one addition—a word regarding the present location of Milton's own copy of Giovanni della Casa's sonnets. At the foot of page 33 Mr. Smart has a note regarding its supposed disappearance. The book is now in the possession of the New York Public Library.

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Shakspeare to Sheridan. A Book About the Theatre of Yesterday and Today. By ALWIN THALER. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1922. Pp. xviii+339.

Among the works dealing with English literary history of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries Professor Alwin Thaler's recent volume on the theater from Shakspeare to Sheridan merits a distinguished place. Our libraries contain many older books on eighteenth-century literature with little in them except anecdotes and trivial comment. These are the works of journeymen in criticism satisfying a demand for literary small talk. At one time these brief chroniclers possessed the field, and scholars, busy in older periods, were indifferent toward the eighteenth century. Particularly in the field of drama, constructive research work was rare. Recent years have seen a salutary change. Nettleton and Bernbaum on dramatic history, Odell on the Shakspeare tradition, and now Thaler on the theater itself are among the careful workmen who have made the eighteenth century their field for intensive critical study. They have traced the changes in English drama from the Commonwealth period to the time when prose fiction

appeared as a serious rival of stage plays. All have produced books that are highly creditable to American scholarship.

The last of these works is the product of long-continued research. Citations of authority are so varied as to assure us that we are dealing with an untiring investigator who knows how to document his text. Mr. Thaler has cast his materials in chapters on the playwrights, the actors, and the managers; on court influence; and on the playhouses of England between the time of Shakspeare and of Sheridan. In all cases he has gone to contemporary sources, particularly to documents unknown to the stage chroniclers, dealing with story rather than statistics; moreover, he has built into this record the research articles of scholars. The whole account is made attractive by the use of two-score full-page illustrations that add reality to the text. His chapter bridging the gap between Elizabethan and Restoration times adds to the usual explanation of the decadence under Charles I. By ill chance he includes Marston (p. 7) among those who held the stage after Shakspeare's death, but he succeeds in proving his theory that managers as well as playwrights forced English drama into bizarre effects to win a hearing. Quite evidently the demand for novelty was responsible for much that disturbed legitimate drama during the entire period under investigation.

The account of commercial rewards to playwrights and players covers old ground, but gives much new evidence. The only adverse criticism of those sections is that facts from widely separated dates are presented without clear discrimination. Social hindrances to stage plays, changes from private patronage to political and then to middle-class support, lay behind the economic rewards of playwrights and players. Stressing the rise of individual stars and autocratic managers as of first importance disposes the reader to ignore the great changes in English society between 1660 and 1800 that made the stage a minor means of culture and amusement. With less evidence Watson Nicholson's book, *The Struggle for a Free Stage in London* (1906), gives a clearer social and political groundwork. It is true, however, that in his chapter on court influence Mr. Thaler has reached approximately the same conclusions in asserting (p. 74) that after 1700 "the court came to the theatre, whereas formerly the players had come to the court." By implication he asserts the fall of royal patronage in 1688 and the subsequent rise of Whig playwrights when the party system of government had given middle-class Englishmen respected places in the cast of characters.

Credit is due the author for his skilful handling of difficult material. The book presents a mass of unwieldy substance in coherent, interesting form. Any reader can follow the trend of events without going back to play texts for a basis; those who are well read in eighteenth-century literature will find the book a storehouse of miscellaneous items regarding stage plays not available elsewhere.

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